



HABITS FOR REPLACING STRESS WITH PEACE

*A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR STEPMOMS AND WOMEN
WALKING THROUGH PRESSURE, CONFLICT, AND
EMOTIONAL OVERLOAD*



HEY THERE

There is a kind of stress that no one really prepares you for.

It's not always loud.

It's not always dramatic.

Sometimes it's the quiet weight of holding a family together.

The emotional math of relationships.

The tension of loving people who are still learning how to receive your love.

The responsibility of showing up with grace when your heart feels tired.

As a stepmom, I've lived in those moments.

Moments when I wondered if I was doing any of this right.

Moments when I felt misunderstood, unseen, or unsure how to respond to the complicated dynamics that blended families often bring.

I had seasons when the stress felt overwhelming.

But God taught me something important.

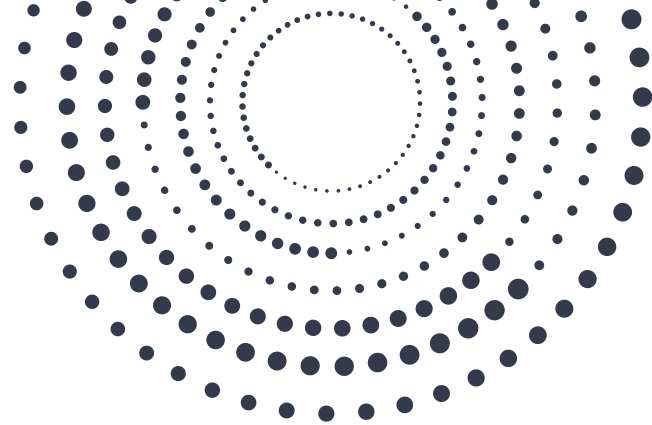
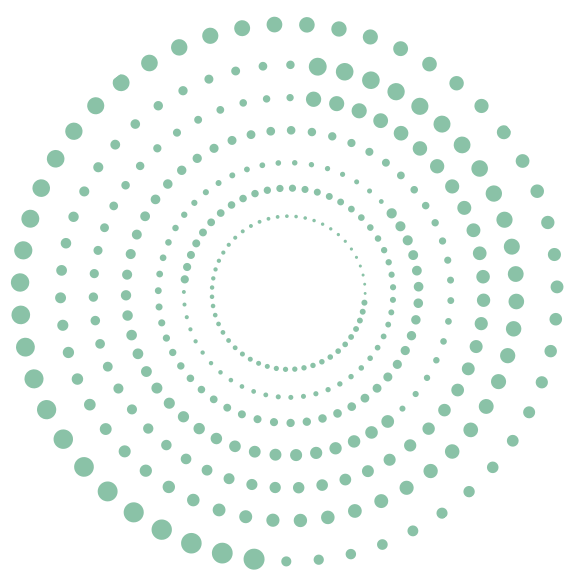
Peace is not the result of perfect circumstances.

Peace is the result of learning how to return your heart to God again and again—right in the middle of the chaos.

Through Scripture, prayer, and some incredibly helpful insights from emotional health practices, I developed habits that helped steady my heart when life felt heavy.

Not big dramatic changes.

Just small, faithful practices that helped me release stress, quiet my thoughts, and trust God with the pieces of the story I could not control.



Those habits became lifelines.

And that's why I created this guide.

Inside these pages you'll find seven simple habits that combine therapy-informed wisdom with biblical truth. They are designed to help you interrupt stress, reset your heart, and reconnect with the peace God promises.

You don't need to master all of them at once.

Just start with one.

Because peace rarely arrives all at once.

It grows through small moments of surrender.

And Sis, if you're carrying more than your heart was meant to carry today, I want you to know something:

God sees you.

He sees the love you give.

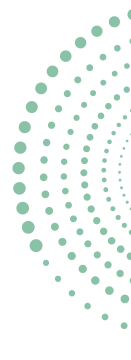
He sees the sacrifices you make.

He sees the quiet ways you keep showing up.

And He is able to give you peace that holds steady—even when family life feels complicated.

I'm honored to walk alongside you in this journey.

- Cheryl





OUTCOMES

By practicing these seven habits, you will learn to:

- Interrupt stress before it spirals
- Calm your nervous system and refocus your thoughts
- Release emotional burdens to God instead of carrying them alone
- Respond to life with wisdom instead of reactivity
- Experience a deeper sense of peace even in difficult circumstances

These habits are not about eliminating stress—because life, relationships, and blended family dynamics will always contain challenges.

They are about learning **how to anchor your heart in God's peace while life is still happening around you.**

THE HABITS

1 PAUSE BEFORE REACTING

Stressor this habit addresses:

Emotional overwhelm, conflict, and reacting impulsively.

When stress rises, the brain shifts into fight-or-flight mode. This makes it easy to say things we later regret or escalate situations unintentionally.

Therapists often teach the importance of creating a pause between emotion and reaction.

That pause gives your nervous system time to settle and allows wisdom to guide your response.

Scripture

James 1:19

"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry."

How this habit brings peace

A pause interrupts emotional escalation.

It allows clarity to return before responding.

Real-Life Example

Your stepchild says something disrespectful.

Instead of responding immediately, you pause.

You take a breath.

You silently pray:

"Lord, help me respond with wisdom, not frustration."

That pause prevents an argument and creates space for a calmer conversation.





2

RELEASE YOUR CARES TO GO

Stressor this habit addresses:

Carrying emotional burdens alone.

Many women carry worries like a heavy backpack:

- What will happen next?
- What if things never change?
- What if I'm doing this wrong?

But Scripture repeatedly reminds us that God never intended for us to carry life's weight alone.

Scripture

1 Peter 5:7

"Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you."

How this habit brings peace

Releasing concerns to God shifts responsibility from your shoulders to His.

Prayer moves worry from your mind into God's hands.

Real-Life Example

You are lying awake replaying a difficult conversation with your husband.

Instead of mentally re-arguing the situation, you pray:

"Lord, I give this situation to you. Show us the next step and guard our marriage."

Peace begins replacing the spiral of worry.



3

BREATHE AND RESET YOUR BODY

Stressor this habit addresses:

Physical tension, anxiety, racing thoughts.

Stress is not only emotional. It also shows up in the body.

Shallow breathing signals danger to the brain and keeps the body in a heightened stress response.

Slow, intentional breathing helps regulate the nervous system.



BREATHE AND RESET YOUR BODY CON'T:

Scripture

Psalm 46:10

"Be still, and know that I am God."

How this habit brings peace

"Be still" is a military phrase that commands us to lay down arms and stop striving.

Stillness allows both body and spirit to settle and rest in God's sovereignty.

It reminds you that God is present and in control even in chaotic moments.

Real-Life Example

Before walking into a tense family discussion, you pause in another room.

You inhale slowly for four seconds.

Exhale for four seconds.

As you breathe, you whisper:

"God, I thank You that You are with me."

Your body relaxes, allowing you to enter the conversation in God's rest.

4

REPLACE CATASTROPHIC THINKING WITH TRUTH

Stressor this habit addresses:

Overthinking, worst-case scenarios, mental spiraling.

Stress often comes from thoughts like:

- This will never get better.
- Everything is falling apart.
- I can't handle this.

Therapy calls this cognitive distortion—when our minds exaggerate negative outcomes.

Scripture teaches us to renew our minds with truth.

Scripture

Romans 12:2

"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

How this habit brings peace

Truth disrupts fear-based thinking.

God's perspective brings stability when emotions exaggerate reality.

REPLACE CATASTROPHIC THINKING WITH TRUTH CON'T

Real-Life Example

Your mind tells you:

"This family will never come together."

You replace it with truth:

"God is still working in our family even when I cannot see it."

Hope begins replacing despair.



5 FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

“Stressor this habit addresses:

Trying to control other people or outcomes.

Much of life's stress comes from trying to manage things outside our control:

Other people's choices

Other households

Other personalities

Peace comes when we release control of others and focus on what God has entrusted to us.

Scripture

Galatians 6:5

"Each one should carry their own load."

How this habit brings peace

It frees you from the exhausting work of trying to manage everyone else's behavior.

Real-Life Example

You cannot control how your stepchild behaves at the other parent's house.

But you can control:

- the atmosphere in your home
- your words
- your boundaries
- your faithfulness

That shift restores emotional peace.



6

PRACTICE GRATITUDE DAILY

Stressor this habit addresses:

Negativity bias and discouragement.

The human brain naturally focuses on problems.

Gratitude retrains the mind to notice God's goodness.

.Scripture

1 Thessalonians 5:18

"Give thanks in all circumstances."

How this habit brings peace

Gratitude shifts attention from what is wrong to what God is doing.

Real-Life Example

At the end of the day, instead of replaying everything that went wrong, you write down three things you are grateful for.

Over time, your heart becomes more aware of God's presence in everyday life.



7

BUILD RHYTHMS OF PRAYER THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Stressor this habit addresses:

Feeling spiritually disconnected and overwhelmed.


Prayer is not meant to be reserved for emergencies.

Short moments of prayer throughout the day anchor your heart.

Scripture

Philippians 4:6-7

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God... will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."



BUILD RHYTHMS OF PRAYER THROUGHOUT THE DAY CON'T:

How this habit brings peace

Prayer shifts your focus from pressure to God's presence.

Real-Life Example

While driving, folding laundry, or walking into a meeting, you whisper simple prayers:

"Lord, give me wisdom."

"God, steady my heart."

"Help me respond with grace."

These moments keep your heart anchored in God throughout the day.

Peace does not come from perfect circumstances.

It comes from **practicing habits that return your heart to God
again and again.**

Some days you will remember these habits easily.

Other days you will forget.

That's okay.

Each day is another opportunity to begin again.

And over time, these **small choices begin to transform** how you
experience life.

If you want deeper encouragement for navigating the emotional journey of being a stepmom, I invite you to read my book:

Waiting to Be Wanted: A Stepmom's Guide to Loving Before Being Loved



This book offers biblical wisdom, honest stories, and practical encouragement for stepmoms learning to love faithfully even in complicated family dynamics.

You can also explore more faith-based resources designed specifically for stepmoms in our

Etsy shop:



Stepmom Sanity Resources

Inside the shop you'll find:

- guided devotionals
- conversation tools for blended families
- practical faith-based resources to strengthen your heart and your home

Visit the store and discover tools created by a stepmom who has walked this journey and wants to help you thrive in yours.

Because Sis— your peace matters, your faith matters, and your family story is still being written.